

## Vancouver Statement

July 25 2019

At its General Synod in Vancouver last week, the Anglican Church of Canada again wrestled with the question of same-sex marriage. We are thankful that the doctrine on Christian marriage in Canon XXI remains unchanged, although acknowledgement of variation (local option) was given in a message from the House of Bishops in which it was admitted that not all 'were of one mind.'

We know that this decision, and indeed the whole discernment process, has been deeply painful for many on both sides of this question. This has weighed heavily on us, especially on those of us who were delegates at General Synod.

We acknowledge together that this painful process of discernment has challenged us to consider how we have treated those who have felt rejection or experienced cruelty on the basis of sexual orientation. We want to affirm the commitment of the Anglican Communion to listen to the experience of sexual minorities and to say again that we are all loved by God and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons are full members of the Body of Christ. We recommit ourselves to ministering pastorally and sensitively to all, and extending hospitality to all, irrespective of orientation.

We must restate our conviction that neither bishops nor synods have the authority to overrule what God has said to us about marriage through the Scriptures and through our tradition. And while we recognize that the reality on the ground is that numerous dioceses will proceed with same-sex marriage, we continue to dissent from the Chancellor's opinion that what is not expressly prohibited in the Canon is then permissible. We believe this argument from silence sets a very dangerous precedent for how our Church will engage in future discernment on questions of doctrine.

We are in a state of serious tension in our Church. Our differences and conflicts over sexuality threaten to bring further division and fragmentation. But we continue to believe that the Church will be led to a greater consensus by the Holy Spirit. In this time of waiting and striving for a common mind on Christian marriage, we commit to remaining in the Anglican Church of Canada with the greatest possible degree of communion with those with whom we disagree. Preserving the Marriage Canon will also keep us at the table with the rest of the worldwide Anglican Communion in a way that would not have been possible had the Canon been changed.

As we strive for this common mind, we must do so in a spirit of humility, rooted in an understanding of our own sinfulness and need for grace. *"For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* In self-righteousness we too often have failed to clearly proclaim the universal debt and defect of sin, our common bankruptcy and brokenness. But there is no distinction: Christ died once and for all. Our message is not one of condemnation but of the forgiveness of sins, of healing and hope to all and for all.

Going forward from this General Synod, we continue the work of deepening Biblical faith in the Anglican Church of Canada. We understand this to be a call for each one of us to submit ourselves to God's will, as expressed in the Scriptures--not just in the area of sexuality, but in every aspect of our lives.

We recommit ourselves, and call on Anglicans across Canada, to pray for revival--that the Holy Spirit will convict us all of sin, bring us to repentance, and empower us in mission and ministry for the sake of the Gospel.

**In the love of Christ our Lord,**

**Communion Partner Bishops of Canada & Anglican Communion Alliance**

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